

## Test Security



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## Session Overview



- UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF TEST SECURITY
- COMMON TEST SECURITY ISSUES
- HOW OSA DETECTS SECURITY ISSUES
- HOW OSA REACTS TO ISSUES
- DETERMINATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES
- EASY WAYS TO STAY OUT OF TROUBLE
- OPEN DISCUSSION

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## Why is Test Security So Important?



- To ensure that assessment results are accurate and meaningful
- To truly reflect a valid and reliable measure of each student's knowledge
- To protect the enormous investments of resources, time, and energy that go into assessments
- Disregarding test security can lead to investigations, invalidations, or in extreme circumstances, even jail!

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## An Infamous Test Security Case...




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## The Atlanta Cheating Scandal



- District-wide falsification of answer sheets by teachers and administrators
- Discovered after newspaper reported unusual jump in test scores on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRT)
- Investigation uncovered rampant, widespread cheating
- 30+ Atlanta school employees charged under RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) statute for conspiring in order to receive bonuses tied to high test scores

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## Common Test Security Issues



	Paper/Pencil	Computer-Based Testing
<b>BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER</b>		
Lost or stolen booklets	*	*
Obtaining unauthorized access to secure assessment materials	*	*
Educators logging into tests to view questions or change responses	*	*
Hacking into computers	*	*
<b>BEFORE</b>	P/P	CBT
Educators or students engaging others to take a test on a student's behalf	*	*
<b>DURING</b>	P/P	CBT
Students giving or receiving unauthorized assistance from other students during a test administration	*	*
Teachers providing answers to students during testing	*	*
Students accessing non-allowable resources (notes, textbooks, the Internet)	*	*
Taking photos of test items or live testing environment and sharing them on the Internet or Social Media	*	*
Accommodations being used inappropriately to cheat	*	*
Keystroke logging	*	*
<b>AFTER</b>	P/P	CBT
Erasing wrong answers (P/P) or changing responses on the computer (CBT)	*	*
Reconstructing assessment materials through memorization	*	*
Memorized test items or answers being posted online	*	*
Printing, emailing, or storing test information in a computer outside the test delivery system	*	*
Accessing or altering assessment materials or scores during the transfer of data	*	*

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### A Brief Digression about Security and Social Media



- Pictures of, and/or discussion about test items on social media steadily on the rise
- No age barrier
- Not limited to just students
- Twitter wins the "Social Media Incident Award" for 2015 – 72% of Michigan's social media incidents
- Instagram the "runner up" – 12% of incidents
- Facebook and Snapchat get "honorable mention"

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### How MDE Detects Test Security Issues



#### Incident/Irregularity Reports

- Link provided before testing for schools/districts to self-report issue(s)

#### Unethical Line

- Public-facing phone number where anyone can report an issue
- Typically anonymous calls

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### How MDE Detects Test Security Issues



#### In-person Monitoring

- Random Monitoring - Schools are randomly chosen for unannounced visits during testing
- Targeted Monitoring- Unannounced visits to schools with security issues in prior test administrations

#### Social Media Monitoring

- OSA contractors use "web patrol" software to monitor for test security breaches, e.g., photos of items, photos of classrooms testing, discussion of specific live test items

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## Post-Test Forensic Analysis

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### How OSA Reacts to Test Security Issues – Self Investigations



- Following a reported incident or complaint, OSA may determine that questions remain and will ask the district to investigate issue and submit formal report and signed statements, with a detailed chain of events and steps taken to remediate issue.
- Thorough self-reports often eliminate the need for OSA to take serious action.

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### How MDE Reacts to Test Security Issues – Independent Investigations



- Following a reported incident, complaint, or insufficient self-investigation report, OSA may launch a formal investigation using independent investigators.
- Investigation teams will arrive unannounced, they may request copies of staff communications and interview staff and/or students.
- The role of investigators is strictly to identify any relevant facts and send report to OSA.
- Independent investigation teams are typically a mix of law-enforcement (e.g., detectives) and education assessment professionals (e.g., ex-assessment coordinators).

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### Determinations



After reviewing all information and evidence, OSA makes one of the following determinations:

- There was no irregularity and the case is closed.
- A self-correction was completed – OSA determines that the school properly resolved the issue and the case is closed.
- The irregularity led to a breach in test security.
- The irregularity resulted in an invalid test administration.
- The irregularity resulted in academic fraud.

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### Consequences



If MDE finds an irregularity led to a **security breach**, possible consequences include:

- District liability for the cost of item re-development and re-administration (could encompass the entire state)
- Re-testing within the test cycle period (potential costs to the district)
- Invalidation of scores with no opportunity for re-testing
- Placement on OSA monitoring list for next year

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### Consequences (cont.)



If MDE finds an irregularity resulted in an **invalid administration**, possible consequences include:

- Re-testing within the test cycle period (potential cost to the district)
- Students in suspected grades and subjects are given an audit test — a parallel form of the test; scores between the two tests will be analyzed
- Invalidation of scores with no opportunity for re-testing
- Placement on monitoring list for next year
- School required to file a training plan with OSA
- School required to inform parents and local school board public of a misadministration and that scores will be invalidated

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### Consequences cont.



If MDE finds an irregularity resulted in **academic fraud**, possible consequences include:

- Re-testing within the test cycle period (potential costs to the district)
- Invalidation of scores with no opportunity for re-testing
- Placement on monitoring list for next year
- Test booklets or test tickets will be held in abeyance under the supervision of the state-appointed monitor and delivered on the day of testing. The Assessment Monitor will closely observe testing and collect and return answer documents or destroy test tickets
- Personnel involved in an irregularity may not be allowed to administer any state assessment
- District Superintendent will be notified so that the district may take necessary personnel actions
- School is required to file a training plan with OSA
- School is required to inform parents and local school board of a misadministration and that the student test scores will be invalid

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### Easy Ways to Stay out of Trouble



- Provide training for staff in appropriate test security, test preparation, test administration procedures, and accommodations.
- Supervise assessment materials closely – they should be secure at all times.
- Follow standardized test administration procedures and directions explicitly according to manuals.
- Closely monitor students and enforce a strict “no cell phone” policy.
- Document everything – chains of custody, seating charts, etc.
- If you see something, say something!
- Cooperate with OSA if something arises

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### Open Discussion



- Questions for us?
- Best practices you would like to share?
- We'd like your feedback on cell phone policies during testing:
  - What is your school's policy?
  - What are your best practices?

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### Contacts



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Thank you!



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